



Testimony regarding
SB 406, AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE OF ASSISTANT RADIOLOGISTS
Presented before the Public Health Committee
February 6, 2009

Representative Ritter, Senator Harris, and members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about Senate Bill 406, which is before the Public Health Committee today. My name is Marc Benjamin, and I am a licensed physician assistant from Farmington, practicing at St Francis Hospital here in Hartford. I am here today representing the Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants (ConnAPA).

Let me first state that it is not ConnAPA's goal to oppose another profession seeking formal recognition through state licensure. As the Radiologist Assistant profession pursues enabling legislation, the issues of eligibility, scope of practice and licensure are best left to the discretion of the Department of Public Health.

However, ConnAPA respectfully requests that the members of the Public Health Committee consider amending Senate Bill (SB) 406 with language to address the current confusion about physicians delegating the performance of procedures using ionizing radiation, most notably, fluoroscopy to licensed physician assistants. We have attached suggested draft language which recommends amending Section 20-74ee of the Radiologic Technologist (RT) Act to allow qualified, licensed physician assistants to perform procedures which use fluoroscopy, as delegated by their supervising physician.

Physician assistants (PAs) have been performing diagnostic and interventional procedures that use ionizing radiation since the early days of the profession. Most state PA practice laws, including Connecticut, permit supervising physicians to delegate to PAs the ability to order and perform diagnostic tests and therapeutic procedures, presumably including procedures that use ionizing radiation. However, state medical imaging laws permit only licensed RTs to perform procedures utilizing ionizing radiation, such as fluoroscopy. This creates a gap between state PA practice laws and provisions that regulate medical imaging.

Allowing physicians to delegate the use of ionizing radiation to PAs is an urgent matter affecting patient access to care. Some supervising physicians believe PA practice laws already give them the authority to delegate radiological procedures to PAs. It is ConnAPA's goal today to ensure that supervising physicians who are delegating these procedures are doing so safely and legally.

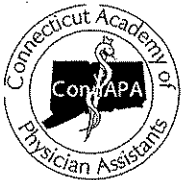
Keep in mind that not every PA in the state performs procedures using fluoroscopy, and ConnAPA's goal is not to usurp an RT's ability to do their jobs. PAs simply want to preserve patients' access to high quality care and use every available diagnostic tool to ensure the safety of the care provided.

This bill, as amended with the language suggested by ConnAPA, will improve our patients' access to care, decrease hospital lengths of stay, increase efficiency of radiology departments across the state, and help mitigate emergency department overcrowding by allowing licensed physician assistants to assist the radiologists with fluoroscopic procedures.

Thank you for you the opportunity to testify before you today.

Marc Benjamin, PA-C

1 Attachment



Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants

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